

StarHouse Origins

By David Tresemer, Ph.D.

August, 2009

Many hundreds of people have passed through the StarHouse. Of those, many have enjoyed profound experiences there. Some have stayed to form the StarHouse community. I am often asked, "How was StarHouse designed and how did it come about?" Individuals who have great capacities of seeing energy – shamans, healers, and highly intuitive people – have also visited and asked, "How did it come about that you built something that has such powerful energy?" Just after the construction was completed, I was asked to present the story of its design to an international conference meeting in New Zealand. I demurred, procrastinated, and finally refused. It was too early. The building had been completed, but the community had not yet been built. The stones and pillars may seem strong, but the true building is made of more than those materials. It has to be sustained by a human community. Nineteen years later, that community has become strong enough that I may speak about how this building was built, and how the community was built up around it.

Why might someone be interested in this story, someone who has never visited StarHouse? It helps you appreciate the powers of geometry in this building and in many other places – built and natural. It makes an interesting story in terms of how to build something – a *thing* in space and time – furthermore, something built intentionally and carefully for the most intelligent use, as a bridge to unseen spiritual realms. We have found that working with a sacred space takes work. If a place and a structure have assisted in the triumphs of inner realization, then a part of one's continued development and thanks begins to include washing windows, carrying wood, and most importantly relating to other people. You help those who have helped you, and you help those who aren't as far along as you've come. This story can assist anyone who is taking his or her spiritual development seriously.

I will share some of the secrets of the StarHouse construction. In addition numerous personal imprints have been given to this place for the benefit of others, gifts that shine out from the warm woods of the floor and ceiling, and from the angles themselves.

I can tell you about how StarHouse came to exist. The story follows the progression of the zodiac, from Aries to Taurus to Gemini and beyond, a model appropriate to the House of the Stars.

We actually began at the end, under the supervision of Pisces, the twelfth sign. Presently our world spins in the Age of Pisces, a label determined by where the Sun lies in the zodiac on the first day of spring, spring equinox – when day length equals night length. At this time, the Sun rises at 5 degrees Pisces, moving slowly backward toward the ending (30th degree) of Aquarius, when the Age of Aquarius will begin.

XII. Pisces – The Fishes – Inner Spiritual Seeking and Study

In Pisces, the twelfth sign, we find the spiritual beings who support our internal strivings to know the truth of spiritual worlds. Pisces also rules the hands and feet. One might say that the being of Pisces causes hands and feet to be made. Thus through Pisces the individual touches the world, senses the world. Sensing without the vision and will power to back it up does not lead to action, not quite yet. One can talk about a project and talk about it some more, yet nothing happens in the actual world. As the geometer, Robert Lawlor, on whose works we based aspects of the design, said upon visiting the StarHouse, “No one actually ever does anything with my ideas – you did!” All the talking and conferring, and what-if talk comprise the important mulling time in the Piscean or community-based conversation. Back and forth, conversation between human beings slowly loosens other capacities to do something about it.

We had such a conversational group that talked about sacred designs, that is, designs based on the principles of sacred geometry, those principles that were used in the imagination and construction of the cathedrals of the world. Those structures are called “sacred” because their dimensions and proportions have an effect on people. Secondly, the dimensions and proportions parallel what is found in cosmic spaces (and in inner spaces). When you stand in Chartres Cathedral, or listen to the sonic phenomena of Thoronet Abbey, or follow the spires up in Canterbury Cathedral – or when you enter the Temple at Delphi or the Temple at Knossos on Crete – you feel uplifted and sometimes feel a quality to that sweeping up. The quality can have a color or flavor, and sometimes a very specific expansion of your awareness so that you understand a little more of the power of creation, and your place in it.

I have traveled to great monuments of stone and to the sparse monuments also – the simple stone circles of England, Wales, Brittany, and elsewhere. They have been stone teachers about how to build in order to support a community. I learned early on that it doesn't serve anyone to visit a site only as a taker. You always bring something with you. There has to be an exchange. Perhaps you say, "I am a student, I am far less experienced than this person or place – compared to the genius shown here, I have nothing to bring." It isn't true. You can bring an apple, an orange, a flower, a bunch of flowers, or a dance, or a song. I have traveled with Karen Rivers and the Sophia Foundation. Karen takes time before entering sacred sites to develop four-part songs with her group, sometimes accompanied by eurythmy (sacred dance from the anthroposophy tradition). With such a prepared group I entered Chartres Cathedral many years ago. When we finished singing in the nave of the cathedral, instead of dying away, the echoed sound grew louder and louder, then broke up into harmonizing bits as it went into all the niches of the ceiling. When you bring something, and are ready to continue giving, then the site will open itself to you and give you something worthwhile. Otherwise, it remains a surface along which the tourist skims, hungry for sensation yet never penetrating deeper.

Our group in Boulder studied the esoteric sciences, meaning the hidden teachings of ancient scriptures of many traditions, including a very specific investigation of geometry and architecture. We began in 1986, meeting on Wednesday nights, each coming from personal studies in many areas, pooling our knowledge. At the time I was deeply engaged with the work of Alice Bailey, supplementing that with a growing interest in the anthroposophy of Rudolf Steiner. Gregory and Gail Hoag were interested in the powers of geometrical constructions. They had just started Metaforms, which manufactures many geometrical forms for affecting the energy of a room in a house or in your own body. Lee Cook had then and now a very active clientele for her intuitive counseling, a mixture of what could be called clairvoyance, clairaudience, intuition, and great common sense. Kevin Townley presented his studies of the Tarot, Kabbalah, and astrology, which later became the basis for his book, *The Cube of Space*. Jai Klarl had been sculpting in bronze the pure geometrical forms, as well as the heavenly beings whom he observed tending those forms. Jillian Klarl joined us with her beautiful voice and very practical understanding of life. Suzanne Walker brought her knowledge of astrology. She was my partner at that time, and when I say "we" during the construction part of the StarHouse, it always includes her, individually or as a member of the

group of five overseers on the job. Great appreciations go to Suzanne for her part in visioning and construction of the StarHouse.

All of these people have contributed so much over the years to StarHouse. To them, and to others who came in soon after it was built – many whom I will not be able to name – great appreciation is owed from those who enjoy that place now.

Each week we met, and talked about these sciences, mixing new research with ancient texts. It was a completely voluntary group of peers, and we enjoyed sharing discoveries of the wisdoms of the world.

I. Aries – The Ram – Vision and Setting Intention

“Talk does not cook the rice,” goes an old saying. The Piscean seems perfectly happy with the talk. But something naturally unfolded. Our group evolved. An intention formed itself to build a space for these studies, to be further explored through movement, in other words, a space empty of furniture, where we could add the activity of movement of the human body, as a means to discover better these truths of existence. Such an intention is the work of Aries, the zone of initiation of ideas. It comes as a vision, sometimes fully formed in the head, the physical area that Aries rules. So it did for StarHouse, in a flash. A design, clear in its general outline, not a design we had ever seen before, occurred for Suzanne and myself.

Along with vision comes an experience of Lift-Carry-Place.

Lift-Carry-Place

An exercise in the art of eurhythmy attunes us to what happens in the zone of Aries, and what happened in the beginnings of the StarHouse. Eurhythmists teach afresh the art of walking – you lift a foot, carry it some distance, and then place it intentionally in a new location. We have grown accustomed to this process, and usually our placements are unconscious, often random, and occasionally unintended. We “awaken” to our placements only when we have made a misstep and twist our ankle. Why not awaken to our placements when we make a good step? When Moses climbed to the top of Mount Sinai, Divinity told him, “Remove your sandals, for you walk on sacred ground.” Yes, let’s become more aware of our feet, and set them onto the ground intentionally. The feet – realm of Pisces – work through the head – Aries – to be set intentionally onto the earth – Taurus. Thus we lifted up in the

vision of this building, carried it for days and weeks, then set it firmly into the earth. The last part takes us into Taurus, an earth sign.

One can only receive guidance from a distance that one can perceive. We did not receive the long view about StarHouse, what it would look like in a few years' time. We saw only what was tugging us onward from a few months in advance. We knew that we ought to build this as a studio space, and that it ought to be constructed in an unusual manner. That's all we knew. Soon we realized that, as we were designing the place, and dealing with building crew, and so forth, that we were receiving clear directions that would take us a short ways, enough to be clear about where we were going at that moment, but not about our destination.

II. Taurus – The Bull – Setting into the Earth

Through an act of aware will, we set the center into the Earth, then pondered that decision over days and weeks. We slipped back into Aries three times, by which I mean we moved the center three times, never very far, the last time being an adjustment of one foot. Each time we lifted up, carried the center-stake of the building as an antenna receiving the pull of the exact place, and then set it down firmly where it had been pulled as if by a magnet. Humans have this intermediary responsibility, to connect the above – heavens and head – and the below – placement in the Earth. We performed these placements barefoot, which helped us in this sensitive process.

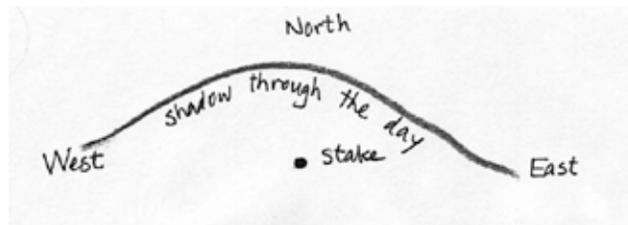
For some months we thought the StarHouse would be in the place that the labyrinth is now. Those interested in the project, including the architects, met there, sprawled on the grass, discussing cathedrals and angles.

Archimedes is supposed to have said, "Give me a lever and a place to stand, and I can move mountains." The lever is the StarHouse. To move mountains, you have to have a firm place to stand. That's the work of Taurus. Once you have that place, you then can relate to the directions – North, South, East and West.

Directions

You can determine the true directions by setting a stake in the ground – our center-stake – and noting the shadow that it leaves from sunrise to sunset. If you have a clear shot to sunrise and sunset, then the beginning of that shadow, where the rising Sun makes the stake very long on the ground to the West, and the end of that shadow, which extends from the

setting Sun to the East, give you a perfect East-West line. You then determine a North-South line as a perpendicular. This method works in every season, though the shapes of the shadows differ. Look at the shape the shadow makes, for we will encounter this shape later.¹



We confirmed our work with a view of the stars, setting a true North by observing Polaris at night. Though Polaris is not stationary, it moves the tiniest bit of any star through the course of a night, a small fraction of one degree. Michael Moore set true North to Polaris, in his career as a surveyor. Little did he know that years later he would study to become a Minister of All Seasons Chalice Church, and then lead ceremonies in the building that he helped to site. You can still see Polaris on any clear night. Step up on the stone directly across from the StarHouse entry, the stone on the northern edge of the earth mound (the “kiva mound”). As you look from this perch back over the prow of the entry area (the “Vesica”), you will see Polaris just poised above the point of that prow. It’s always there, day and night, though most people (not all!) cannot see it during the day.

These techniques are more interesting than taking a compass reading and adjusting for the inaccuracy of the magnetic reading in relation to true North. By observation, we connect the directions to the stars and to the horizons. Aligning with directions means that you acknowledge that the realms differ, for example, the direction of the rising Sun differs completely from the realm where the stars move only a very little, and where the Sun never goes, which in the Northern Hemisphere is to the North.

While some people are well aware of the four-directions practices of the North American Indian medicine wheel, or similar constructions in other traditions, others scoff at these practices as superstitious. Actually, directions are so fundamental to our ancient heritage, that they are well worth exploring further. Living in architecture that ignores direction dulls our senses. Entertain the question, “How are the directions different one from another?” Face East for ten minutes. Do so for the other directions. Observe how your

¹ The bow would bulge in the other direction if we did this in the Southern Hemisphere.
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experience differs. Face each for an hour. Then you begin to open up the magic of the directions.

Setting

When you place an intention into the earth, you orient to the directions. You also orient to the details of the setting, the exact surroundings. The land had originally been hunting grounds for Indians, and arrowheads have been found here. I have not seen any of these but have heard about them from some of the predecessors on this site named below.

StarHouse is just at seven thousand feet above sea level. When you look East, you see the high plateau of Boulder below, at 5500 feet. To the South of StarHouse spreads a meadow of large extent in which St. John's Wort, *Hypericum perforatum*, grows in abundance. This land is certified organic, and the St. John's Wort is harvested for drying and also for tincturing in alcohol to make a medicine that has been shown good for depression. "Hypericum" relates to the being of the Sun, Hyperion, and one look into these dazzlingly bright yellow flowers explains why. In a wet year, there are grasses in profusion, Crested Wheatgrass and Squirrel-tail and others, with great seedheads and awns that pick up the slanting rays of the Sun in early morning and late afternoon making them glow golden brown. Wild irises can be found here and there, though they come up best in wet years.

I happened to be on site in 1987 when Buck Barnes came for a visit from his home in the Midwest. He had lived on site as a boy of seven, not in the old homestead slowly rotting into the ground, though his family had used that as a storage shed. They lived in a house torn down in World War II for its precious timbers. He related that he had traveled to Mapleton School (at Mapleton and 9th Streets) daily on horseback, sometimes with the snow up to the horse's stomach. His family had grown potatoes, hay, and dry peas on the slope. A decade before his time, on a summer's day in 1920, an immense downpour had slid the entire field down the hill to the present gardens in Pine Brook Hills. The family then couldn't make it a profitable farm. And Buck Barnes family couldn't make it either, and the family moved back to the Midwest.

In 1958 Gilbert and Anne White bought the property. They were prominent in zoning changes for Boulder County, which changed to 35-acre zoning in 1975. They also protected other natural features in the county. The Anne White Trail, named in honor of her conservancy work, can be reached by a hiking down to the North of StarHouse to the stream at the bottom.

The Whites were responsible for keeping the property together until I bought the parcels in early 1987.

StarHouse exists on the edge of a forest mostly of Ponderosa pine. Where the land tilts down to the North and is more moist, the pines yield to Douglas fir and some large cedar trees. In the arroyos to the North there are wild herbs. We have thinned areas of the forest, and cut swaths to serve as firebreaks. We have cut nearly seven thousand trees in all.

The four trees just to the east of south, at the edge of the Easter Morning Dance Ground, played an important role in the feeling of proximity to the StarHouse. The Grandfather tree directly to the South, in front of the old 1904 homestead, also played a role. The Grandfather tree is bigger, but the four smaller trees are growing in more challenging soil. They are certainly 150-200 years old. Lee Cook once suggested that the four trees are four Indian men on horseback overseeing what we do, with warm interest and also protection. The Grandfather tree definitely looks over what goes on at StarHouse.

Further to the South we come to what we call Mary's Well, a rare emergence of water to the surface in this semi-arid climate. Wild irises grow there, as well as rhubarb planted there when there was a homestead a hundred years ago. We will talk about that setting and others too later on. Here we are merely recognizing that there are features around the StarHouse that began to make themselves felt. Adjustments of the location of the StarHouse resulted from sensitivity to those features.

Further still to the South lies a large trench from an old clay mine. Opportunistic miners had combed these hills first for gold, then silver, tin, molybdenum, and finally settled on this property on clay. The clay there is so fine that it could be used to build insulators for electrical lines. It fetched 50 cents per full wagonload delivered at the railway head in Boulder. We added some to the plaster mix for the kiva, adding also some finely ground quartz crystal. People who spend time in that grassy-sloped cleft feel that they're resting the womb of the Earth Mother. There's still gold in there, about one ounce per ton, not enough to make mining worthwhile, but enough to feel in the brilliance of the mother's lap.

To the North of StarHouse one can find stands of very tall trees in thick dark soil that supports forest herbs. To the South, past the Ministers' Cabin, large lichen-crusting granite boulders rise up to give a view back to the snow-tipped mountains of the Rockies twenty miles to the West. The realm of Taurus earthed the initiative of Aries.

III. Gemini – The Twins – Proportion

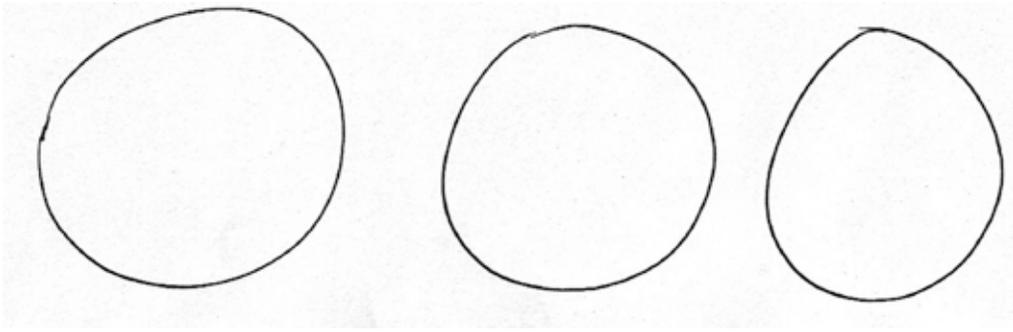
In the air sign of Gemini, the work then commenced of understanding how the building would be proportioned. In our design, we knew that the community of spirit would be our aim, so we wished to create an architecture that supported spirit. The ancients guide us to the understanding that a circle represents – and generates – spirit, with the warning that pure spirit can be dreamy and not grounded. A square represents and generates earthiness. We sought something between a square and a circle, and knew from the initial vision that it should be a twelve-sided figure – not a circle, yet not bearing down on the occupants with hard angles.

To create the design for a twelve-sided figure (even for a four-sided figure), you use a circle. This is so fundamental that you have to understand some properties of a circle, some of which many people have forgotten.

The Circle

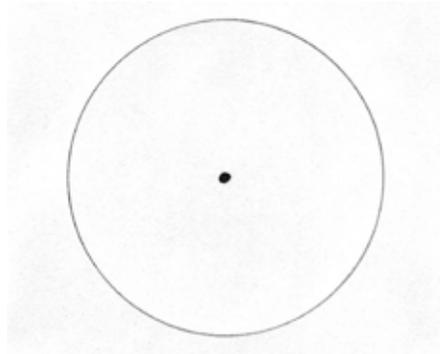
We see the shape of a circle often, and think little of it. Stand up, stretch your arms out wide to the sides, and twirl. You make a circle. At the center lies your heart. This is the foundation for all circles. It's easy to make an even circle by twirling, but it's difficult to draw a good circle by hand on paper. When the Pope was looking for a portrait artist, he sent a messenger to every known painter at the time, to ask for a sample of their work. The messenger also visited Giotto, who was little known at the time. Giotto couldn't be bothered to create a whole painting just to show off to the Pope. He impulsively picked up a brush and quickly dashed off a circle on a small board, and handed this to the messenger, who was insulted, but went away. He almost didn't give Giotto's sample to the Pope, but did so, and there the Pope beheld an absolutely perfect circle. He gave Giotto the commission. He knew that the one who could make a perfect circle possessed an equanimity in all directions given only by grace.

Most of us make lopsided circles, all understood to be circles.

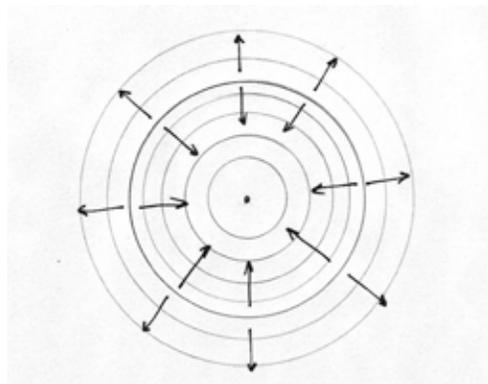


A circle is known by the exact curve that you see at the beginning of the series. Even if you observe something inexact, such as the drawings at the end of the series, the brain adjusts, knowing that a circle is intended. We shall see later that these inexactnesses are important.

If you have studied the most elementary geometry, you know that a circle is formed from a center, often unseen or implied, and sometimes shown, as below.



The center is a point, meaning a location without dimension. That is, truly you can't see it, but that doesn't mean it lacks power. It holds in all the points around it that lie at the same radius, thus forming the circle. It pulls on them, the force for pulling named centripetal. What pulls out is centrifugal; what pulls in is centripetal.



Indeed, what shows up as the circle are all the little bits that weren't thrown off further out by centrifugal force, or swallowed into the center by centripetal force. A circle shows a kind of stasis amidst powerful attractions in both directions. A circle shows the bits not attracted to the infinities at the center or at the periphery.

Perhaps we are moving too quickly. Let's back up. How do you make a circle? How do you actually form one? "Take a compass," you say, and that's perfectly correct. What is a compass? With it you can adjust the distance from one pointer to the other, thus setting the radius. One pointer fixes at a chosen center, and the other pointer roams around, marking a paper with graphite or ink. You have made two choices – where the center is set, and what the distance is between center and circumference. After that, you can play all you want, mark the paper quickly or slowly, but in the end you will see the form of a circle arise.

The compass was invented to replace its predecessor, which was a piece of string or rope, held in two places, one end set in the chosen center, and the other marking out the arc around the circumference. Here you see the dynamics better. Imagine two people using the rope method to mark out a large circle on the ground. They hold the rope taut. One person holds the center, the other person creates the circle, and then create from that various trigonometric measures. Thus were the fields of Egypt remeasured every year after the floods.

When we demonstrate the predecessor of the compass, we take a close look at rope or string. At the StarHouse we can take some of the plentiful yucca leaves, pound them to get the green out, and from the long tough fibers twist very strong string. Though our string makes a straight line for us to mark out arcs of circles, it's actually made of twists and spirals.



Note this when we come to an understanding of what is really in a circle.

Imagine the surveyor's rope going around faster and faster, such as a small merry-go-round in a playground. The person at the outer edge has to hold on very tight so that he or she isn't thrown off and flung into space. The one in the center also has to hold tight. Being an unmoving pillar requires strength too.

A centrifuge works in just this way, going around faster and faster, so that the centrifugal energies separate those bits which are less dense, from those that are more dense. The more dense are pressed to the outside, and if the machine were bigger, would be pressed

even further out. If the machine were the size of a planet, they would be pressed out into space.

An opposite energy works to hold things to the inside, the centripetal energy. Lucky for us, the centripetal energy of our Earth is stronger than the force of the rotating Earth throwing us out into outer space. Gravity, or the love of the Earth for its objects, holds us in. In some places the inside has a great deal of power, such as in maelstroms on the sea that suck whole boats into their whirling vortices. In the cosmos, black holes suck whole suns into their center.

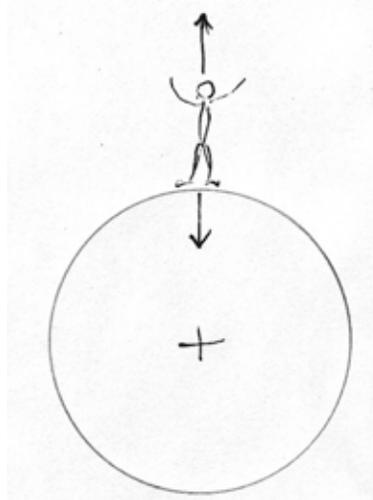
When you make a circle freehand, you often create an oval or oblong for these reasons. Either your arm is whipped out as you round out the circle, or something pulls it toward the center. Thus the inexactness reveals something of the dynamics of a circle. Giotto demonstrated complete balance between centrifugal and centripetal forces.

Circles in nature follow this too. A circle in a tree ring shows something that was sucking the new material toward the center so strongly that it became glued to the previous layers, and something also that pushes out to the outside, sometimes with enough force to eject pieces of bark. A “fairy ring” of mushrooms in a meadow shows another form, where the mushrooms are pulled in to the original place of beginning and are, at the same time, pressed out to gain new nutrients. Ripples in a pool of water from a stone thrown into it show the pressing outward in a fluid medium of bits, all in circular form, but never remaining.

A standing wave where a stream strikes a protruding rock, however, shows a kind of balance. The impact of water against rock causes waves of all kinds to emanate. The ones going downstream are swept swiftly away. The waves we see are those going upstream that go at just the same speed as the water coming downstream. The waves going upstream that move more quickly are lost in the confusion of the downstreaming water. The waves going upstream that move more slowly are sucked down into the chaos of impact, and whirled around into the eddy behind the rock. Indeed, in standing waves we see the perfect model for how all circles are maintained. What we see as the circle is really a balance of forces. All else is sucked into the center or expands out to infinity. Just because we don't see those waves moving in or out does not mean that they don't exist. Rather they have swiftly moved away.

What is sucked into the center we can call sympathy for the center. What is repelled out to infinity we can call antipathy for the center. What we see as the circle itself balances sympathy and antipathy.

In this same way, we walk the surface of a large circle, our globe, in a balance of sympathy – to go into the earth – and antipathy – to eject ourselves from it. Yet this periphery has an attraction to it also. Spirit calls us, and thereby we are able to stand upright against gravity, so we can see a sympathy for the infinite – for spirit – as well.



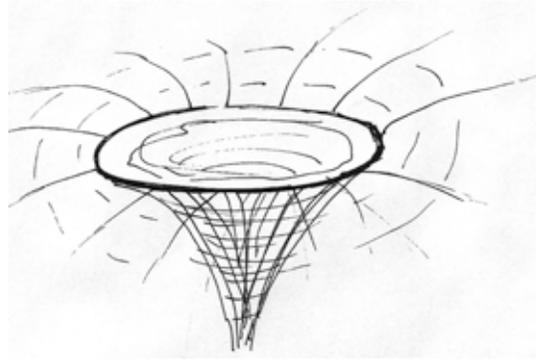
What forms the circle are those bits for whom the forces of sympathy and antipathy are in balance, that don't fly away into the atmosphere and aren't pressed into the center, that is, those bits in balance around the perimeter.

We can think more accurately about a circle. If you were to somehow go around to the side of a circle, and look at its dynamics, you could see better what's happening. We can see how things closer to the center are pulled inward even faster. In the immediate vicinity of what appears as a stable zone, the perimeter of the circle itself, the forces act less dramatically.



Note that this begins to look not so much like smooth hyperbolic curve funnel, but like a vortex. For spiral movements begin to show themselves because that's how energy works.

In addition, forces also pull away from the center, what have been named the centrifugal forces, and these move ever faster the further you get away from the perimeter.



When you stand at the edge of any circle, you must realize that you are in a zone of seeming calm, a rim of balance on the edge of explosive and implosive forces.



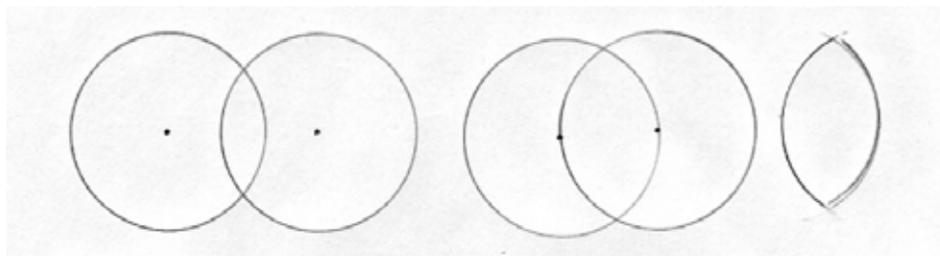
In truth, whenever you see the form of a circle, you should think of it three-dimensionally, as in the previous figures, always under tension, a “dynamic balance.” Though we use the simple perimeter as a short-hand for a circle, we must never forget the other dynamics of the circle in action.

When you cast a circle intentionally, you create these vortices in action. You can then adjust how deep the hole goes in the center, and how steeply and swiftly the energy moves out at the top. That is the work of the magician, covered in the section on Scorpio.

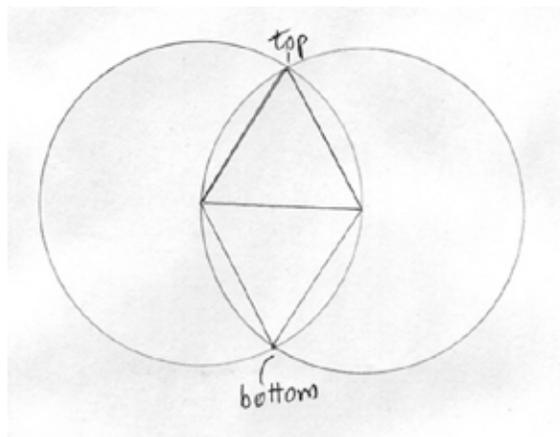
Circles upon Circles – Proportion

When you draw a circle and then another the same size, you can overlap them to make interesting shapes. One particular overlap is shown at the end of the next drawing, where the center of the second circle is placed on the perimeter of the first circle. This puts the center of

the first circle on the perimeter of the second circle. The overlapping part has come to be called the *vesica piscis*, or *mandorla*, or other names. The lens-shaped or almond-shaped enclosure has been used in art from every tradition. Inside you might find a Jesus, or a Mother Mary, or a Buddha, or a Kwan Yin. You can see it in the entryway to Chartres Cathedral as well as in Thai paintings of the Green Tara. Often the lines of the circles by which the vesica was made are taken away. One circle represents the Heavens, one the Earth. Where they overlap is where we live, along with the previously named divine humans or human-like gods.



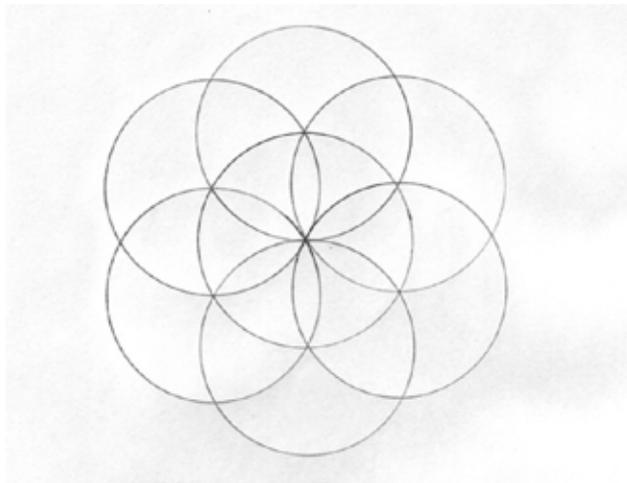
If you connect the centers and the intersection points, you get two equilateral triangles. If the distance from one center to the other center is one unit, then the distance from the top of the vesica to the bottom is $\sqrt{3}$, or 1.732. The line drawn from top to bottom of the vesica lies at an exact perpendicular to the line connecting the centers of the circle and this is the way that the right angle has been constructed for thousands of years. It only needs a piece of twine to figure it out. This connection between Earth and Heaven turns out to be very practical when you wish to bring heavenly truths – the angles being angels – into the Earth realm.²



² “The angles are angels” is a trick of language, a homology or look-alike, that gives a precious hint about how to experience the StarHouse or any building – sense the quality in the spaces of the angles to see what kind of divine being – angel – lives there.

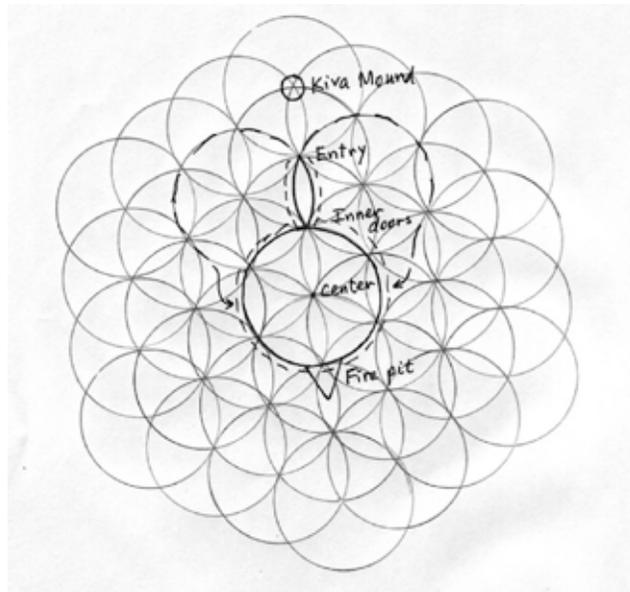
Note how the vesica by itself mimics what happens when you follow the shadow of a stake through the course of a day that I illustrated earlier.

If you set the center of another circle at the intersection points of the first two circles, and continue in this way, you construct the “Flower of Life,” an astonishing figure because an indeterminate number, π , having to do with the length of the perimeter of a circle, has been found to hold *exactly* six circles around a seventh central circle. Not approximately, as the number $\pi - 3.141592654$ – can never be finished, but *exactly*. Out of something unknowable, a number that doesn’t end, you have something exact and known – the number 6. I wonder if this holds true in other solar systems? I would not be surprised to find that this gift is specific to our planet.



Carl Sagan wrote about the number π being taken out to a few billion decimal places, and then finding in the patterns of numbers messages for how to build a spaceship to travel to other worlds. The movie *First Contact* dramatized the story, though had to have a hidden message from outer space rather than finding in the key of the circle, π , the secrets for how to negotiate through the cosmos. Sagan’s idea is an alchemical one, the notion that in the structures of matter itself, there are secrets for transcendent experiences and evolutionary growth.

Keep going with the circles and you get to a pattern that we laid over the entire landscape, orienting the center point of the central circle to the center of the StarHouse, and aligning the patterns to the four directions.



The shape of the StarHouse can be seen in this figure. The StarHouse empowers the pattern, as the pattern empowers StarHouse. You see that what we call the “vesica entryway” is not the fat lens-shaped vesica piscis, but one of the petals of the Flower of Life. The short dotted lines show that the walls of the main space and of the vesica entryway are outside of the geometry that formed them. We wished to have the geometry something that we could experience in the room, not inaccessible in the walls. The longer-dash lines show the exterior walkways.

IV. Cancer – The Crab – Enclosing protectively with measurement

What of the dimensions? How big was this proportionately satisfying design? We can have a stable circle at a few nanometers in radius and call it a hydrogen atom, one electron spinning about a little nucleus. We can have a stable circle at 93 million miles and call it an orbit, in this case the orbit of the Earth about the Sun. The dimension of radius has a great influence on the quality of what happens in that circle.

When you set a dimension, you are fixing the balance point. All forces too strong will be flung outward. All forces that are too weak will be sucked inward. When you gather for a Circle Dance, as in the Dances of Universal Peace, everyone in the same circle is working a similar quality of experience together. Add in the spiraling movement of these dances which mimics the spiraling effect of the Earth’s rotation (called the coriolis effect), and you have built a dynamic vortex of energy that can open you to the mysteries at the infinite periphery and the

dimension-less center, both places where we can't go in our bodies, but can in our awareness. There we find spirit awaiting us.

Cancer – The Crab – rules the ribcage that holds and protects the interior organs of the body. It has a sense of limit, a certain dimension, no larger and no smaller. Cancer rules dimension.

We chose 18 feet. The average height of the people who were involved in building this was six feet, so we had three of them, head to toe, laid out horizontally, 6, 12, 18. 18 extends to 36, 54, 72, 108, 216, then 432 and 864. This number is very important in many iconographies, many religions, from *The Secret Doctrine* by Helena Petrovna Blavatsky to Steiner's anthroposophy. 432 actually has a hidden number which is implied—4321, important in the understanding of vast spans of time, the *yugas*. 4321 also defines the shape of a tetraktys, which we will mention later, as we built one directly to the South of StarHouse.

X
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X X X
X X X X

4321 poses the question with which the Sphinx challenged Oedipus, “What being walks sometimes on four feet, sometimes on two feet, and sometimes on three feet, and has only one voice?” Depending on your point of view, Oedipus answered glibly – “The human being, for each begins by crawling, then walking, and finally walking with a cane.” – or with sophistication – “The human being, for we relate to the Earth via various bodies through the development of the ages, including the physical, etheric, astral, and soul bodies; the final completes the four with one voice of the soul, the heavenly gift of the ‘I AM.’”

The StarHouse has markers at various distances from the center to hold different vortices of different energy qualities. The rug in the center has the diameter of the globe hanging above. The edges of the cupola match the circular meditation benches in the kiva space beneath. The center of the benches marks the 18-foot foundation radius of the whole design. The outside of the building moves it further out, as you can see from the drawings. The standing stones lie four radii away. Various markers lie at 216 and 432 and 864 feet away, holding yet larger standing-wave circles. Each of these sets up a different resonant frequency that holds energy for those inside the ceremonial space.

Let's give an example. At the last ceremony of the year of the Path of the Ceremonial Arts for Women, the women congregate inside the StarHouse dressed for graduation, expressing what they have learned in their three-year training program. A group of men arrive at a prearranged time in the night's ceremony to stand at the circle of the stones, facing outwards, not even peeking inwards, to protect the space for the women. When the men arrive, quietly, to perform this vigil, the women always say they can feel a difference. Something has been held strongly that releases them to find resources that otherwise had to struggle to come to the surface. The men diligently keep their focus outward, attending to the energies that wish to come to the inside, especially the uninvited ones. This practice uses the power of human attention to work creatively with the streaming energy of the circle of StarHouse. Recently the women have returned the favor for men graduating from Men's Path of the Ceremonial Arts.

V. Leo – The Lion – Acknowledgement of the Heart at the Center

So far, we have been working with diagrams of circles in two dimensions, though we recall that each of the circles that we've been using has a vortex below and above. We had to create vertical space in the StarHouse, and we used a system of interlocking circles, a "Flower of Life," based on half the foundation radius, in other words, nine feet. These seven points of intersection go vertically to the top of the cupola, and down below the floor of the kiva meditation space below the main floor.

{Figure – elevation drawing of StarHouse}

The "heart" or central circle matches the height of the human heart in the center.

Meanwhile, there is another heart, that in the solid stone beneath the surface of the earth, in what we call the "kiva." This is a name from the Pueblo Indian peoples for a meditation and social space, ranging in size from large to small, with a long and varied history. Though Native Americans have blessed the kiva of the StarHouse with pipe ceremony and prayers and meditations, this should still be considered a casual use of that name, as it does not perform the same religious function in our community as a formal "Kiva." However, metaphorically, it serves the same purpose – for deepening in complete spiritual intention into the Mother-granite of the Earth. The various designs in the "kiva" space were created and built by Jai Klarl. This includes the cube set by the four pillars that hold up the floor above, interpenetrated by a sphere shown by the bench rims. The interlocking cube-and-

sphere extends the age-old symbolic problem of circling-the-square, where the circle represents Heaven/Spiritual and the square represents Earth/Material – thus finding the square that has the same circumference as a circle becomes a task in integrating Heaven and Earth.

Here are some details about the design of the kiva. The six-sided triangular prism in the upper hatch comes from ships of old where the light was needed below decks, not a shaft of light in one place, but diffuse light spreading in many directions. This “deck prism” integrates nicely into the twelve-fold geometry of StarHouse.

To the South in the crawl-space is a large egg-shaped jar full of water. From the rotation of the earth, the water slowly rotates and builds up a small but persistent magnetic charge. This “vortexian water jar” needs to be filled with water to the brim every year.

Jai set two long “light tubes” from the South into the Kiva, which are now mostly covered, as they bring in light on very few days.

The Winter Solstice Sunrise ceremony relates StarHouse to the many stone ceremonial structures from the previous ten thousand years – from New Grange to Stonehenge to various alignments in Egypt and the Americas. On the few days around Winter Solstice, Ministers of StarHouse and friends have gathered at 6:45 or earlier, then gone into the Kiva at about 7:00 AM in the morning. They sit on the southeast side to experience the visual phenomenon taking place on the wall opposite. For some years an invocation was taught in the Vesica before going down into the Kiva:

Oh, Thou who givest sustenance to the universe.
From Whom all things proceed
And to Whom all things return.
Reveal to us the Light of the True Spiritual Sun,
Hidden by a disc of golden light,
That we may know the Truth
And do our whole Duty
As we journey to thy Sacred Fire.

When people have settled in the Kiva, the door is shut. There is a viewing tube in the door itself that is opened for this one time of the year. As the glow of predawn increases, it streams through the viewing tube and lights up the pillar on the northwest side of the Kiva. Then the Sun itself rises, throwing a powerful pulsing image onto that pillar, which moves slowly across. The entire place is filled with the spirit of light of Winter Solstice. Only at this time of year does light come into the Kiva space.

Thus the shortness of the Taurus stone, for the Sun at Winter Solstice dawn rises over the distant horizon exactly atop the Taurus stone, as the light of the shortest day streams into the kiva. (The Taurus stone is dug much more deeply into the ground in order to support the Sun on winter solstice sunrise.)

All during the design, we were guided by the notion that “The building already exists in spiritual realms; it is our responsibility to bring it down as faithfully as possible.” Thus spoke the chief architects for the StarHouse, Philip Tabb and Robert Armon. This would be called an idealistic or Platonist world-view, and definitely differs from the common desire of architects to show off their capabilities by putting their stylistic stamp on whatever they design, often in conflict with the client’s needs. The StarHouse architects were here to serve the process. Intense periods of meditation occurred – every joint, every connection, every decision about size and shape, every choice of material. All these were meditated upon to find the right proportions, angles, dimensions, and substances. There was no plywood used in the entire structure. We chose not to use laminated timber; we used real timbers, whole trees for the pillars, of course, and for the beams too. Assistance in the process of intuitive guidance came from Gail Hoag and Lee Cook, both members of the initial esoteric study group.

Our next step, an invocation to the elements to assist in the construction of this project, can be seen in this fire sign because of an extraordinary event that occurred at exactly the same time. On July 9, 1989, at 11 AM, 14 people (7x2) walked individually to the site carrying the intention of gathering bits of Nature to lay at the center of the proposed building. We sang songs, including, “Oh Great Spirit/ Earth, sun, sky, and sea/ You are inside/ And all around me.” These people dedicated their life force to this project, from support through meditation, to actually building it. Tom Dugan, the chief builder came, as did Ron Aarons, a psychologist that I had met in Maryland, and through training with Barbara Brennan. Ron had chosen a shift in his life, and joined the team of laborers.

On that very same day, at the same time, the Black Tiger Fire started. Also called the Sugarloaf Fire, in just two hours it burned up a whole mountain, and destroyed fifty homes. We could see the plume of smoke from the StarHouse. I have reflected in years since about this most interesting conjunction of events. I have heard that very positive occurrences in the world are matched by set-backs and difficulties elsewhere. I have resisted this notion, preferring the belief that the earth in its entirety can advance positively, bringing along

everybody and everything. Maybe this is not true, and maybe the worst fire in Boulder's history was being matched by something very positive for the community.

VI. Virgo – The Virgin – Into the Earth

We blasted the earth. Now why should we think of blasting rock as related to Virgo? Partly because the sign Virgo is related to the element of earth. There is another reason. If you've ever had the experience of blasting a hole for a house you're building or something like that, you really understand the term "virgin rock." The blast happens, they clean out the hole, and you feel you are in the presence of holiness, that here is rock that otherwise would have stayed down there several more million years. You can experience the beings who have, through sacrifice, compressed themselves into mineral substance. Blasting is a huge release for them and quite unexpected. We received a gift of opening, of joy. I've had this experience several times. The StarHouse was the most potent.

Some of the diggings from the central hole, deep into the earth at the first chakra vertically, we put onto the kiva mound outside the front door – the first chakra horizontally.

Into the jagged-edged hole, we began to put structure. The four pillars that hold up the StarHouse, and can be seen so clearly in the kiva, were constructed. The center of the kiva was dug down even further so that we could place a series of crystals at the bottom or first chakra point, deep into the Earth, and about six feet below the present kiva floor level. On the night of autumn equinox 1989, I lifted a very large clear quartz crystal to the stars, which greeted the crystal with a display of star fire, then set that crystal deep down into that hole, along with a few other pieces, including pieces of stone and earth from other places on the planet. We recognized the Virgin immanent in adored Earth by giving her some exquisite gifts.

VII. Libra – The Scales – Balance

We brought together all the materials, stone and wood and concrete and nails. We balanced that with our own bringing in crystals and copper wires and gemstones. The most important part of the Libra phase in my opinion was that we actually sang to every nail and board and item that went into the building. We took that quite conscientiously. Jillian Klarl and I would go to the site after something had been delivered. After all the noise of the delivery trucks, we let the materials rest for a day or two. Then we sang to it all, best early in the day, before the

work began. We sang our intentions into it and we sang our thanks and gratitude into it. The building has been singing back ever since.

VIII. Scorpio – The Scorpion/Eagle – The Magician

Scorpio, the work of the magician. We needed a magician to work with concrete. Concrete is amorphous, nondirectional, basically confused in my experience, and that's one of the reasons it tends to suck energy. It is hydrophilic, that is, it loves water; it will soak up water. That's a materialistic expression of the way concrete loves to suck energy. We chose to work with that very actively. We laid three rounds of copper coils around the foundations where the cement was going to be laid. We also had four-inch lengths of copper and crushed crystals that we threw in to the cement. The proportions we used were four parts milky quartz, three parts clear quartz, two parts rose quartz and one part amethyst. The milky quartz came from the land surrounding the StarHouse. Our rose quartz came from a mountain in Colorado. The clear quartz came from Arkansas, and the amethyst came from Brazil. It took some convincing to get the local school of mines to crush these beautiful crystals into small bits. Those bits were the object of many songs for some weeks before they were actually sunk into the concrete.

While the cement trucks were pouring, we sprinkled these crystals into the forms for the foundation. Everyone with a part in the project was asked to participate. Crystals will take on your intentions. It's not helpful to have a lot of crystals in your room if you're not actively working with them. The crystals will not guide themselves but need direction.

The engineers wanted us to put the twelve pillars of the building into concrete or on top of concrete in order that they not spread apart at the base. I didn't want to cut off the direct connection to the Earth. We compromised by finding twelve rectilinear stones that we surrounded with concrete. The trees found support on top of these stones, under which we arranged all the gemstones traditionally associated with the zodiacal sign represented by the trees and by the planets that traditionally rule that sign. These rested on the earth. The concrete got to do its job of holding things together, while the direct vertical line of support came directly from the earth through a large natural stone.

The work of the magician continued to the standing stones, which were put in later. These ancient stones, shaped by nature in the 1.4 to 1.75 billion years since they were made, go very deep in holes dug by hand to conform to the shape of the stone. To the bottom of the stones we attached the metals associated with the planetary rulers of those signs. Thus we

melted silver onto the base of the stone for The Crab, whose ruler is the Moon. We melted gold onto the base of the stone for The Lion, whose ruler is the Sun. Melting gold is particularly wonderful as it turns to a radiating peach color in the crucible. The planetary rulers go in both directions from the primal pair of Crab and Lion. Into the base of The Twins (Gemini) and The Virgin, we mixed mercury, for Mercury. Over the base of The Bull and The Scales (Libra), we melted copper, for Venus. Inserted into the base of The Ram (Aries) and Scorpio, we put iron, for Mars. Over the base of The Archer (Sagittarius) and The Fishes (Pisces), we melted tin, for Jupiter. Over the base of The Goat (Capricorn) and The Waterman (Aquarius), we melted lead, for Saturn. In addition, we tipped our hats to the association of Uranus with Aquarius, of Neptune with Pisces, and of Pluto with Scorpio by putting on the bases of those stones special elixirs relating to those planets from Pegasus Products.

The work of the magician continues various aspects mentioned earlier, putting the power of the circle and its vortices into action, for example.

IX. Sagittarius – The Archer – Electrical Fire

Sagittarius, the sign of the philosopher, the one who knows fire, the uses of fire, and the routes in which fire can properly and safely go. To begin with, we could see the choice of the pillars in this way. We needed very large trees that we knew we could find in the surrounding forests. Picking the trees took some weeks where I measured and communed with the trees. Then I asked a crew of five to help fell the trees, cut to length, then remove the branches. Before we did that, we communed as a group with the trees. I asked this group of builders, just before picking up the chainsaws, to put their foreheads against the rough bark of the trees, and tell me what images arose for them. I wrote down what they told me, and found direction in these images as to which of the twelve zodiacal signs that tree aligned with. Which tree had a more Taurus nature? Which tree had a more Sagittarius nature? Gemini was the easiest, as the tree actually forks at the top, showing an aspect of The Twins. I gathered together the fruits of meditation of the five-some, and it became readily apparent where each tree ought to go.

We marked how the tree was oriented to the directions, where it was standing, how it had grown, and we set it in the StarHouse in exactly that same orientation. This relates to the micro-ferrous compounds that are in living things. Tiny bits of iron in the brains of birds

permit them to orient to the magnetic sheaths of the Earth and navigate that way. We also have millions of bits of magnetic iron in our brains. Trees do too, and we wished to orient them in the same way that they had grown for the last 120 years.

After we knew the destination of the trees in the forest, that is, which zodiacal being each would represent, and after a brief ceremony of earnest thanks, we felled the trees. Soon after, a team of twelve people gathered to move the trees by hand to the site of the construction. One at a time, to each tree we attached five and sometimes six cross pieces. Three were log carriers from Snow & Nealley in Bangor, Maine, who make quality forestry tools. The other two or three crosspieces were stout timbers lashed to the tree. On either side of each crosspiece a person would stand and lift right into their center without having to lean over. On a command from the leader, a role that shifted, the tree lifted. It's astonishing how much a group of people can accomplish. Assisting were many who brought mint-scented water to drink, and who made a lunch for everyone. From remote places and down steep slopes, we were able to bring all the trees to the site.

The wires with which we circled the concrete foundation circle three times were hooked up to and extended out in all twelve directions and then into the earth as far as we could, ranging from four feet to six feet, ending in spirals. We extended the copper wires up the back of the pillars to the copper roof. This forms a mini Faraday cage. Michael Faraday had the idea that if you created a mesh of copper all around you, you'd be protected from lightning and from electromagnetic interference. The StarHouse is not nearly as extensive as that as we have only twelve major wires going down. At the Boston Museum of Science, there is a large Vandergraff generator, a large sphere of aluminum, about nine feet across on a column about five feet across that stands twenty-four feet high. A wide belt goes around and around inside, very fast, building up a huge charge of static electricity. In the demonstration, a grounding rod with a little ball about the size of your fist is lifted hydraulically by the operator. When the top ball is eight feet away a lightning bolt goes from the big sphere to the little sphere with a loud kabang! The operator repeatedly builds the energy and discharges it because the kids love the loud noise. The operator stands in a cage with reinforcement bar all around it. Then he lifts his cage towards the large charged sphere. He actually puts his hand against the inside of the rebar. The lightning hits the outside of the rebar at thousands of volts of electricity. The charge stays on the outside of the bars of the metal cage.

I've been in the StarHouse three times that lightning has hit the building. The charge goes around the outside. It doesn't destroy anything.

Three years after completing the StarHouse we put in a circle of 12 stones at the 72-foot diameter. We had been collecting long, thin, unhewn stones for some time. Modeling the megalithic structures of old, such as Avebury and all the stone circles in England, the stones are dug deep. For most of our stones, the hole is four feet deep. The Aries stone rises almost nine feet out of the ground plus the four feet down in the ground.

The reason for the deep hole is that it's difficult for the elements of air and earth to connect. That's why lightning seems so dramatic. The wonderful book, *Needles of Stone*, speaks about this eloquently. It's very hard for the air and the earth to interact, to converse. You can listen in on the conversation with these stones. They start to crackle and you can feel a buzz all over their surface.

Why did we wish to go to the trouble to insert these stones? For another very good Sagittarian reason. We built the parking lot distant from the structure, so that people would discharge the stuff of their urban day on the short walk through the forest. Four minutes in nature does more work than I can do in a half an hour of meditation. People walk down from the parking lot. Previously I could perceive the brunt of their unfocused attention energy hitting the StarHouse. Then I realized one of the main ways that stone circles functioned in olden times and now. They actually harvest unfocused, unconscious, very potent human attention energy, and they start running it in a circle. As people come down from the parking lot, the first thing they see is the stones. A tiny bit of their attention goes into the stones, individually, and as a group. People who make billboards know exactly how this works. All advertisers know how to harvest just a fraction of freely roving attention energy. We're using the same ideas in order to harvest it for something that's good.

The attention energy goes to these stones and it actually begins to circulate, creating a protective circle. This kind of design thinking belongs in Sagittarius.

X. Capricorn – The Goat – Integrity and Initiation Ceremony

In normal construction jobs, the ends justify the means. In other words, do whatever you can to get the job done. In most jobs soda cans and cigarette butts are thrown into the trench, and it's covered up, and who cares if no one sees it? Who cares what is done on site so long as the house is built? Our project was different. For us, the means or process had to have

complete integrity. No trash was buried in the foundation holes. No crass music was played on site. No short-cuts or shoddy work or even arguments occurred. That last one is rare, and we ran into it. Even though we had a good crew of five people working on the building, even through a particularly snowy winter, there were times when difficulties between people flared up. In a normal construction job, the two people would be told to just get over it. Tricks might be played back and forth, that sort of thing. Not here. We had a group of five supervisors that was on-site much of the time. I was there often, doing peripheral work. I gathered tons of stones, for example, to set along the rim of the foundation on the inside and also at the twelve corners of the building on the outside, all now below the ground. I built the Winter-Solstice-Sunrise trench that goes from the center of the kiva meditation space over the top of the Taurus stone to the far horizon somewhere in Kansas (it's more likely not that far, more like eastern Colorado). While I was there, I had the opportunity to mediate several disagreements, all of which were resolved – except one.

At the point when the chief builder said the structure would be done in two weeks, a conflict arose that could not be resolved between the person building the meditation space in the bottom and the person up top. This happens towards the end of jobs when the time is going longer than expected, and each workman is getting phone calls at night from his next job asking him what's been taking so long. The two would not shift from their positions, and their emotions ran strong. We asked ourselves, ought we grit our teeth and tough it out for two more weeks? We answered no, it compromises our integrity. We stopped the job and sent everybody home. We sent everybody home! We told them that we don't know what's happening, but we know we have to finish this building in integrity and that people need to work together. Two months later things had cleared. We could feel it. We called up everybody and they had not taken on other jobs, or they had taken some small jobs and finished them. They were all available, which amazed them as much as us. The workers came back in and finished the StarHouse.

On the evening May 30th, 1990, we had a proper opening initiation, a very solemn, wonderful ceremony. Each structure guides its own ceremony, and this one depended on the directions. We had all seven of the directions represented, the four directions of North, South, East, and West, as well as the below (Jai down in the kiva mediation space), the above (Gregory up a ladder high in the cupola), and the within (Lee in the very center). It felt very much like pushing the start button on a power generator. The whole place began to hum. At

that time, we did not realize that the Sun lay exactly atop the star Aldebaran, which we have discovered from more recent research to be the Eye of the Bull (Taurus), the Life Star, the Origin of the "I AM" of Humanity, research which was done years later, and is spoken about in the chapter on star wisdom.

XI. Aquarius – The Waterman – Community

The Age of Aquarius has the reputation for common-unity or community. We're not there yet, but we are preparing for it. We had a brand-new building, that we had completed, as prompted by our inner guide. We had gotten there by following this path of surprises. The word "church" can mean a building, a group of people, or a set of ideas. Often a group of people within a certain denomination meets in makeshift or rented spaces, and then raises money to build a structure for their particular method and dogma. We did not have a dogma. We had a small group of people involved in looking at all traditions, and finding what each had to offer for inner spiritual work. We followed the seasons, and thought of our own sentient beings as more important than the scriptures which we studied and from which we could have chosen.

"Build it, and they will come," is the promise of the movie *Field of Dreams*, and that was somewhat how this went. Once the structure was built, it became clear that a community would form itself from those who felt a right and positive resonance with the principles embodied in the building and its natural surroundings. Through accretion, others would come who felt this resonance. And so it has gone.

In Colorado at that time, you could feel a calling to a spiritual path, and devote your land to that use, naming it a "church." It was legal then. It has since become illegal to do that in the mountains without knowing ahead of time what you're planning. We could not have done that, as we were led a few steps each time, not with a map of the next decade or longer, and not with a predefined dogma to present. Ours was the meandering path to spirit, finding the treasures that listening closely can reveal, and continues to be so.

All Seasons Chalice: Where did this name come from? When the StarHouse existed only as a design idea, the name of an organization to oversee its use was discussed by our esoteric study group. Since the science of astrology was so important in the twelve-fold design of the StarHouse, we examined the acronym ASC, an abbreviation for the term Ascendant, that is, the point in a star-chart where the horizon lay at the moment of any important event such

as your birth. As the building was a sacred container (*chalice*, with all of the tradition around that word relating to the Grail), nestled in Nature, relating to the teaching of the annual seasons, and as it had the immediacy of what streamed in as fresh material from the horizon, we chose “All Seasons Chalice” or “ASC.”

From the beginning, the esoteric study group met in the StarHouse. Other experiments occurred, some that have stayed, some that have gone, and some that have transformed. I had written investigations of the psychology of the spiritual seeker in twelve plays of Hercules’ labors, each one connected to a particular zodiacal sign. These were community theatre, meaning that the actors were amateurs, people who loved what they were doing, but without training in the theatre arts. We learned as we went along. Often I had two groups rehearsing over the same period, as I would start rehearsal for a performance at a full moon six to eight weeks ahead of time, thus overlapping the performances. I have written about this in *War in Heaven: Accessing Myth Through Drama*. There were fifty monthly performances of the Hercules plays, where Hercules was sometimes enacted by a man and sometimes by a woman.

On September 15, 1990, Timothy Dobson brought his first Dances of Universal Peace to the StarHouse. They have been there ever since. Timothy was for a long while the Head Minister at All Seasons Chalice. Timothy has written more about this form of dance in his chapter in this book.

Lila and I began to work together in 1993, beginning with the community theatre pieces. She has been largely responsible for the dramatic work in this zone of Aquarius, the growing of the community of those on this particular path. The Path of the Ceremonial Arts, begun in its early form in 1993, has matured through the efforts of Lila and her teaching partner, Anastacia Nutt, to become a three-year training program with outreach programs in other states and countries.

All Seasons Chalice Church was formally instated with state and federal authorities in 1993. We worked on the mission statement for a long time, and this is the result:

All Seasons Chalice
provides sacred ground
for spiritual and ceremonial practice based on
love of the Divine,
honor for all beings,
earth stewardship,
and seasonal and celestial community celebrations.

Aspects of this statement will be explored in later chapters. The first phrase, “All Seasons Chalice provides sacred ground,” summarizes much of its history.

Wonderful human beings came forward to become Ministers. Rick Paine, an ordained Wesleyan minister, was head minister for some years. When we had public hearings in the years 1997 and 2000 to clear up the status of All Seasons Chalice Church, Rick came forward to speak. Despite the many inches of documents showing the activities of StarHouse in search of spirit, they had believed rumors that All Seasons Chalice practiced forms of dark magic, and Rick’s well-groomed appearance and intelligent presentation impressed them.

In 1995 we formed our group of church deacons, what we call Keepers, those who have responsibility at an event for the energetic and janitorial maintenance of the place. At first we had meetings of sixty people, where we decided that each event would need six Keepers, all with defined posts, also wearing armbands of baby blue to set themselves apart, and using walkie-talkies to communicate between parking lot and StarHouse. Looking back, that was such an earnest overdoing-it, and now we have usually one Keeper for an event, and for the large seasonal events, two. For Winter Solstice we have needed more, especially on Family Solstice, where parents, desperate for something that has meaning in the commercial frenzy of the Christmas season, bring all their children.

I underestimated just how much work is needed to build with human beings. It’s not as simple as saying, “All right, you handle the Full Moons, and I’ll handle the Sun ceremonies.” It’s not about “handling things.” It’s about initiating and cultivating relationships. These relationships are part of the construction. The StarHouse, a beautiful building fit together as a fine cabinet, with so many lovely details, seemed like a young woman at a debutante ball, bright and shiny, and utterly dependent on the liaisons she would forge on the dance floor. We’ve had weddings and memorial services and funerals and christenings and solstices and equinoxes and all manner of human gatherings. It takes many of these occasions to knit – and knot – people together. That’s especially challenging today. Taking the example of marriage, the couple prefers to bring their family into a nice space, get married, and go off somewhere to have a wild party. They want some holy person to bless them and then they want to go away. They don’t understand that they bathe in the good energy of all those who have packed that space with good energy, conscious or unconscious of their gift. That’s why they choose StarHouse. They don’t understand that they have a responsibility to the sense of place to acknowledge, honor, and even give back to the structure that has supported them.

Rupert Sheldrake likened the akashic zone of subtle energy, what Lynn Taggart calls the zero-point field, to a large reservoir. Monks in Tibet turning their prayer wheels freely add great quantities to this reservoir of good energy – love energy, healing energy, life-force energy – and they can draw from it when needed, always understanding that they need to add more in than they take, because many people may not be capable of adding in energy to the reservoir. Modern people don't understand this responsibility. You can't really pay for what StarHouse has to offer. Freely offered heart energy cannot be measured monetarily. It's part of our job to teach people how to find balance here, how to take energy, and then how to return to build it up again.

Mother-Father Vortex

Please recall the discussion of the circle in the section of The Twins (Gemini). We enacted the three-dimensional circle when we initiated the form of the Mother-Father Vortex. In a StarHouse full of people, we told everyone that we would invoke a Mother Vortex. All those who felt called to enter a Mother Vortex would please move clockwise (looking from above down to the floor), while holding a eurythmy “ee” gesture, arms straight, in this case the right arm down into the earth and the left arm angled up into the heavens, streaming energy sourced from the heart. Those in the Mother Vortex would then begin to chant a long “ah” sound. Anyone, male or female, could join the Mother Vortex. Then we said that we would invoke a Father Vortex, moving counter-clockwise, using also the “ee” gesture, though this time with the left arm down toward the center and right arm up and angled to the heavens. Those in the Father Vortex would sound an “ee,” ideally at an interval of a fifth (Do-Sol) from the Mother Vortex people. We warned them that their patience might wane after thirty seconds, but that this gesture and tone would go on for a few minutes. Also that it need not be one line, but several lines, as in two bands of moving vortices. This is important when you have many people and a single line shimmies but doesn't move anywhere. Then the announcer invoked the Mother Vortex. Once it became stabilized, the announcer invoked the Father Vortex.

In a very short time these counter-moving reciprocal forms creates an astonishing amount of power. The StarHouse is made as a container for this kind of generated energy. The roof dissolves as the vortex streams upwards. The floor falls away, and you feel as if you are walking in mid air. One person or a small group can then stand in the center and deliver a

prayer or oration that is sent deep into heaven and deep into the earth, as well as impressing into everyone's being. One such prayer:

Oh, Great Spirit.

Roll away from me the weight of dead and frozen thoughts.

Oh, Great Spirit.

Clear away from me the fog of falsely sweet illusions.

Oh, Great Spirit.

Ignite in my heart the warmth of true love,

that with new eyes of new love

and my angel at my back,

I may behold the Truth of the world,

I may feel the Beauty of the world,

and I may act, with courage, for the Good.³

The people in the center need to be prepared for an extraordinary amount of energy. I once did this without adequate preparation and was energetically strained. It took a month of rest to get my balance and energy back again.

At the end, those in the center walk backwards with hands outstretched, to hold everyone else's hand, as we finish with a single tone.

Seeds

In many of our ceremonies, we use the metaphor in the StarHouse of the development of the plant – from seed, then the shoot and the leaves, then the flower, then the fruit, and then the seed again. We use that metaphor quite actively during the year. It cycles between contractions and expansions. The seed is fully contracted, asleep. The shoot and leaf expands. The flower bud pulls it back in, a contraction. The flower expands again. The stage of pistil and stamen contracts. The fruit expands. Inside the fruit, the seed forms and contracts. We've gone right from the ground up. This balance between expansion and contraction – between centrifugal and centripetal force – gives us a sense of breathing through the ceremonial year.

The zone of Aquarius relates to the building of community and has taken years. I am lucky that I did not give large presentations of the building before this stage had developed for a while. We had to endure several tests to the spiritual impulse behind StarHouse. One

³ Written by myself, and contained in *Earth Prayers* by Elizabeth Roberts and Elias Amidon.
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neighbor in particular was bothered by the spiritual activity taking place at StarHouse. Though the StarHouse was distant from his house, he did not like what was going on there. In a series of attacks taken to the local county government, he claimed that we were doing all sorts of things, from being trashy, to being incendiary (in a place where wildfires are a real threat), to sacrificing animals, to dancing naked in the moonlight. That last one shows the power of rumor because it was still being discussed and dismissed in an article in the local newspaper years after it was whispered into someone's ear. Resistance makes life more challenging, and also makes you stronger. Through slander, accusations, and innuendo, it's important to stay strong and not stoop to the tactics of the attackers. This in itself is a kind of spiritual training, to act in the highest integrity, and indeed to love the attacker as someone who has taken the time to test your notion of who you are and what you are doing.

County regulations do not speak of "the meaning of life" or of "spirit." They have wisely set aside the possibility that some uses of land can involve this fundamental human activity, which is beyond their capacity to figure out through rules and regulations. As much as agriculture and retail stores are important to human beings, so is this mysterious activity around "meaning" and "spirit." They call this activity a "church," and aren't very specific about what that means, which is appropriate. Of course, people differ about what a church should look like, how people should dress, what they should do when they're together or apart. But deep down it's about "the meaning of life" and the conversation with "spirit." StarHouse engages these issues in many sorts of ways, ways that have unfolded naturally over the years to meet the needs of those who are drawn there. The architecture sets a location where these things will occur, creating the conditions most conducive to the most vibrant possible conversation with spirit.

A Maori elder once visited Denver and told her host, "There's a place up there" – she pointed – "that I have to go. I can see it." She described the place. Fortunately the host knew about the StarHouse in the foothills thirty miles away, and was able to bring the woman there. She had been able to sense the vortices active at the StarHouse.

On another occasion, a Buddhist monk was speaking in the StarHouse with his eyes closed about sacred places around the earth, and why sacred places were important. Suddenly he opened his eyes and said, "Like this place!"

Extensions

Many other structures have sprung up around the StarHouse that have unfolded naturally from the basic structure. I will mention several of them very briefly, in order to give some grounding in the varieties of creativity that have gone on here.

- Walkways. The circular walkways that go from the entry to the eastern and western side doors show two of the large circles of the foundation geometry. The stones coming out from the entryway show how the inner rings of those circles intersect. This is what you see when you look into the head of a sunflower or onto the end of a pinecone, two swirls interacting, creating rank upon rank of curvy squares.
- The generator shed to the northeast. For several years, we did not have electricity, unless necessary. We had a gasoline powered generator in this little shed but mostly used candles and lamps in the StarHouse itself. This shed now has a small shrine in it.
- The tool shed also to the northeast. This originally housed the composting toilet for StarHouse. Lines would form outside in the snow during breaks in our activities. Now we have very high-class composting toilets at the WaterHouse, so named because it conserves water.
- We built the Easter Morning Sunday Dance Ground from a gently sloping part of the land. From there we view the rising of the sun far to the East. You take ten steps up to get there, thus working with the family of 5. Venus' orbits as seen from the Earth are etched on the top platform, creating a five-loop form over a period of eight years. A windharp made by Sundara has adorned the top area for many years. It is active in very low consistent breezes, not so much in blustery winds.
- Beyond the Dance Ground, one finds a rock with a hole in it. That hole was drilled for setting explosives for the blasting of the foundation. The rock was lifted up into the air and landed not far from where it sits. We adjusted it so that it occurs at one of the 18-foot intervals, exactly on the North-South line.
- At the site where the original design for StarHouse was worked out, we have a Cretan-Style Labyrinth. As the copper-clad explanation says, the number of turns that you make going in and coming out is 16. This is the number of vortices in the throat chakra. The number of turns using the Chartres Cathedral twelve-fold labyrinth form is 64 (16 x 4). Furthermore, when you work the seven-fold in relation to the seven chakras, you enter in the following order: 3, 2, 1, 4 (heart in the middle), 7, 6, 5, then the center, which is the octave. I recommend that people touch the chakra on their body in this order as

they walk the labyrinth. Originally the labyrinth was made of the sods in the pathways stacked to the places in between the pathways. Every stone on top of the sods was placed by a person using the labyrinth. At one point Sig Lonegren, author of *Labyrinths* and *Spiritual Dowsing*, visited and confirmed that water was doming up underneath the center of the labyrinth.

- Mary's Well, a rare appearance of water in a dry field, was originally developed by Gilbert White, though it was named later by Lee Cook. For a long time, the cylinders of concrete were covered by tall grasses that grew in the moisture and fell over the concrete cover. In 2003, we rebuilt the entry to this extraordinary upwelling of water, setting flagstones around. Jim Paschis crafted a beautiful wooden cover with a large sphere of glass with high chatoyancy (refractive glow) in the center of a vesica motif. Immediately after the area was finished, a group of women from the Middle East – Jews, Christians, Muslims, and Pagans (meaning earth-based traditions) – initiated it on a cool autumn morning, using it as a mikvah, that is, a place for ritual immersion in the sacred waters of Mother Earth. Originally, the wild plums near Mary's Well were fenced to keep grazing horses from destroying them. Now they have been trimmed, with a seat for enjoying the shady arbor. Sig Lonegren initiated the largest plum tree as a sacred tree, in the tradition of trees near wells since ancient times. He tore a piece of his wool sweater and tied it to the tree, making a wish. The tradition is that you tear something from a piece that you value – tying plastic bags or cheap stuff as you see at some sites is not correct – and your wish will come true when the elements have dissolved that fabric.
- “Morning Sun View” is a sculpture by Jim Paschis making a hole in loose stone, as if the stone were floating. Through the hole, one can gaze to the eastern horizon and watch the sun rise, particularly when it's due east, at spring and autumn equinoxes. These rocks, what Jim describes as garnet biotite gneiss, are the oldest rocks in Colorado, 1.85 billion years old.
- Up the hill from the old homestead lies the Goddess Grove, with a swing, a statue of Kuan Yin, that has been painted and covered with semi-precious cabuchon inlays by Jai Klarl. One account says that she sits in this particular posture because she can then jump up quickly in compassionate action.

- Monuments of stone lie at 216, 432, and 864 (East only) feet from the center in the cardinal directions, reinforcing the basic geometry. Note that the number 12 (divisions of the StarHouse) equals $2 \times 2 \times 3$. The number 18 equals $2 \times 3 \times 3$. The number 972, the vortices of the crown or seventh chakra, equals $2 \times 2 \times 3 \times 3 \times 3 \times 3 \times 3$. In all of this we are dealing with what I call the families of 2 and 3.
- Tetraktys. I have explained earlier the 4321, summing to 10, within the family of 5. “Tetra” means four in Greek, as in four points or pillars on a side. You can find out more in the book by L. Gordon Plummer, *By the Holy Tetraktys!, Symbol and Reality in Man and Universe*.
- To the East from the Tetraktys, beyond Mary’s Well, there is a lightning tree that shows what a direct hit can do. The lightning came down the tree, exploding the bark off along one side, and dug a trench several inches deep to the telephone lines twenty feet away.
- We admire the trees on the property. In this semi-arid climate, the large trees can be 150 to 200 years old. We performed a biodynamic practice called the Cosmic Pipe Tree Treatment in 2003, where forty trees had special biodynamic preparations set in the four directions, thus balancing and strengthening their energy.
- In the Water House one can see innovative work with concrete, the leaf forms in the floors, the bas reliefs, including life forms on the Sumerian tree of Paradise on the outside rim of north side, a birth sequence on the inside north wall, and general star and dolphin fun elsewhere. There is a large Om in Sanskrit behind the central pillar tree. The tables of the picnic area show the numbers 6, 8, 10, 12, and 24 at play.
- In the posts and ropes, leading down from the parking area, one can see expressed the dynamics of what is called the Fibonacci series. You begin with the numbers 0 and 1, and then find the next number by adding the previous two numbers, as follows: 0 1 1 2 3 5 13 21 24 55 89 144 233. If you divide a number by the number after it, you achieve closer approximations of the great proportion *phi* (ϕ), equal to $(\sqrt{5} - 1)/2$ or .618. This is called the golden proportion, the definition of right proportion, found in sunflower heads, nautilus shells, and also in human design. You can find out more in Mario Livio’s *The Golden Ratio: The Story of Phi, the World’s Most Astonishing Number*, as well as any book on design. Note that *phi* puts you into the family of 5. Walking along the rope, where the posts are put at intervals corresponding to the numbers in this series, either the next higher or the next lower in each case, brings you into the family of 5.

- On back of the Leo pillar hangs a mask given in November 1998 by a Maori elder near Christchurch, New Zealand, to connect with that tradition. It loves our singing, and it connects us to the very Christian spiritual shaman tradition in Aotearoa, “Land of the Long White Cloud.”
- The Ministers’ Cabin was built before the StarHouse, in 1987, though it now serves a support function for StarHouse. I personally hand-adzed the beams and posts there. This meant fashioning long-handled adzes to the various cup shapes that we needed. You stand with feet on either side of a beam laid on the ground and begin striking down and back, as if with a digging hoe. You follow the grain and learn how the knots go, making grooves which give the finished piece a most interesting texture. Because my fingers were partly numb for some years after this, I did not do all of the adzing of the StarHouse beams. Ron Aarons did a good portion of that adzing.
- Close by on private property, inspired by the StarHouse, lies a dodecahedron, which means twelve sided in three dimensions. (The proper title for the StarHouse footprint as seen from above is dodecagon.) The dodecahedron has the central dimension of nine feet (half the basic 18-foot measure of StarHouse), just enough room for five or six people to sit in meditation. Putting the number 12 in three dimensions rather than in the two dimensions of the StarHouse dodecagon opens up the experience of twelve-ness. When the sacred geometer John Michell in *The Temple at Jerusalem* says, “The fundamental character of nature is duodecimal,” we then become very interested in $2 \times 2 \times 3$.
- Also close by and inspired by the StarHouse there is suspended from three trees a double or “star” tetrahedron. “Tetra” means four. This form has four equilateral triangles put together to make the simplest of the Platonic solids. It looks like a three-sided pyramid, its apex pointing up. When you take another tetrahedron and point its apex down, and insert it through the first, you have a form much admired. In this one you can sit and enjoy the sensation of spinning through the cosmos. This form has been termed a *merkaba*, after the Egyptian name of the vehicle that takes the adept back and forth from spirit realms.
- Jai Klarl made a great effort to create the stone circle to the northwest of the StarHouse, at the edge of the flat part, as the hill readies to descend rapidly. It is for a small group to sit with the support of special stones.

- The stone set out to mark the seventh chakra point, toward the standing stone for Capricorn to the North, was gifted by David LaChapelle⁴ from Crestone, Colorado. The purple matrix and included chunks have given this the common name pudding-stone.
- Other details will be revealed in time.

Many other impressions have been made upon the land, gifts given, blessings delivered, more than can be counted or recognized. People wish to place something meaningful in a special place, or they quite unconsciously leave an energy pattern behind. Custodians of the StarHouse have to decide which of these leavings is worth tending as a positive contribution, and which ones have to be cleaned up, refreshed, and perhaps composted, so to speak.

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As the number 18 is so important to the geometry of StarHouse, we celebrated its 18th birthday at the end of May, 2008. The main architects returned – Phil Tabb and Robert Armon – affirming that this was the most interesting structure of their careers. Jai Klarl and Tom Dugan attended, as well as others. Ron Aarons shared his inimitable humor. Each one let us know what had gone into the structure during its construction.

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Thus a structure is created in thought and brought to earth, by human beings working with all of the elements, in service to both human beings and elements. This is a House where the Stars come down to earth, and that facilitates conversation up from the Earth to the Stars. One finds meaning here, not something that can be codified, corralled, owned, consumed, and killed, but meaning that shifts and transforms, and enlivens each one who inquires, in whom it works its magic.

⁴ On the Board of Advisors for many years, now deceased.